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Business Park Members Meet

On Friday 17th March, Aycliffe Business Park Community hold their next News & Networking session. This is a FREE event, between 8.15am - 10.30am at Planet Leisure. The session is open to Aycliffe Business Park residents only.

Coffee Morning

Rose Lodge Care Home, holds a coffee morning on Wed. 29th March 10.30am. Refreshments and cakes served. Everyone is welcome to attend. Information from Diane Tweddle, Activities Coordinator on 01325 271301.

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION FOR NEVILLE PARADE AREA Community Centre Offers H.Q.



Neville Community Centre is now run by the charity "Friends of Senior Citizens Charitable Trust". This organisation was set up by Peter Beaty in 2003 with its 3 Trustees responsible for running the Centre.

When The Cubby moved into the Centre in August 2015 Peter Beaty was the only named Trustee at the Charity Commission.

Four new Trustees were immediately appointed and a new bank mandate put in place. Peter Beaty resigned in September 2015 and the Centre combined with The Cubby was managed by Bill Blenkinsopp under the control of the Trustees.

Bill Blenkinsopp recently resigned and the control is now under a total of six Trustees. The Cubby Charity is in the process of amalgamating with Friends Of Senior Citizens Charitable Trust.

The Trustees are keen to see the Centre used by more local residents and therefore support the formation of a Residents' Association using the Centre as its base. The Centre is in excellent condition and ideal to be hired for many different activities including private parties.

Syd Howarth chairman of Great Aycliffe Residents' Association is also keen to see the Neville Parade area have their own association of householders. Other organisations have proved their worth since being formed in different areas of the town in recent years. Syd said: "GARA has encouraged the formation of Residents' Associations and they have proved to be successful, attracting people to meetings, dealing with local issues talking to councils, landlord Living, the police and utility providers.

GARA will be assisting Neville Parade Community Centre trustees, not only to encourage the formation of a Residents Association but for the community to make greater use of this very useful facility. For an association to succeed there will need to be great interest shown, with people volunteering to be officers and committee members. If you share an ambition to see a Residents' Association formed please contact Syd Howarth



Neville Parade Centre's large Hall with stage, smaller dining/meeting area with kitchen available



at Newton News. Tel: 01325 300212, e-mail: syd@newtonnews.co.uk
All enquiries to hire facilities or to offer voluntary help at

Neville Parade Centre should be addressed to the Trustee and Secretary, Lileen Cuthbertson on 07961 733524. E-mail: lileen@msn.com

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HRA Trip to "The Dogs"

Horndale Residents' Association first trip of the year was to Newcastle Dog Racing on March 2nd. A great night was had by all enjoying a 3 course meal, free drink and a free bet all for £5 normal price £15. The track gave us a £5 discount to keep the cost affordable and Race 6 was named the Horndale Stakes and by coincidence the winning owner was ex Newtonian Mark O'Donnell.

We still have seats left for our next trip to The Great North Hancock Museum on 25th March. You can use the trip for a day in the city, enjoy shopping, lunch with a drink and no hassle parking. We pick up at Horndale and the Phoenix Club (Legion) £5 each - coach leaves at 9.00am.

Contact Martin on 01325 316148 / Philip 07756065132
Philip Clark, Chairman



NEWCASTLE STADIUM THURSDAY 2ND MARCH 2017
THE HORNDALE STAKES

Isn't Easter About Eggs?

Aycliffe author, Steven J. Corner has just published his children's Easter book, entitled 'Isn't Easter All About Eggs?' with Rossendale Books.

It is heart-warming story that follows Mia and Jaelyn as they discover the real meaning of Easter. It truly was a happy Easter. New Life and a new beginning.

This is the author's sixth book following 'Twelve Ghouls of Halloween' which had significant success in the US during 2016.

Steven J Corner is a senior electrical and electronics engineering lecturer at Darlington College and, also, a Royal Marines Commando trained reservist in his spare time. The new book is available as a paperback or eBook from Amazon and Waterstones Bookstores.

GREAT LINE-UP FOR AYCLIFFE FESTIVAL



Aycliffe Festival's closing date for applications is 31st March so now is the time to get your application in. Funding is still available, please contact the Festival Coordinator for further details on 01325 30070.

We have several events already in the Festival and some which are awaiting approval from committees before we can announce their inclusion.

The Music Night at the Working Men's Club will run again this year following its success in 2015 and 2016.

The music will come from headliners Ocean who are a well-known local 4 piece band specialising in Pop and Rock classics. Band members are Richard who plays rhythm guitar and is the main vocalist, Mick is the lead guitarist with Adrian playing bass guitar and Paul on the drums.

Ocean are supported by Micky Rich a local performer. Ocean and Micky Rich on the same bill has the makings of yet another great night out. Tickets are only £2 each. Information available from Paul Morrison on 0780 1395492 or e-mail paul.morrison1949@googlemail.com.

There will be a 'Party in the Park' which is a FREE evening show with bands from the Durham Brass Festival in attendance on Friday July 14th in the Town Park.

The STEM event is another event which has been with the Festival since 2015. This year there will be a change of venue to the Leisure Centre in the Town Centre. The event which will be held on Tuesday 18th July covers many aspects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. Many displays are

interactive and are designed to enthuse and inspire young people to take up work in these fields. For more information contact Mr. D. Spensley 01325 375977.

An event not yet announced is a synthetic ice rink which will be sited from Monday 24th – Friday 28th July. A possible location for the rink

is the Town Centre. The rink will hold around 45 skaters at a time, so it is large enough to cope with the expected demand. Skates will be available, as will 'guides' for toddlers to help them negotiate the 'ice'. More events announced in April, after the Festival Working Group's next meeting.



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Saturday 18th March - "Untold"

Playing rock and pop classic's with their own unique twist, plus a few party anthems to sing and dance to - **Recent Review:** That was without any doubt the best live music event we have had at The Wine Bar - EVER! The only word I can use to describe "UNTOLD's" performance tonight is "SPECTACULAR", thank you guys for another truly memorable night!

Mark A was unbelievable . . . Your rendition of "Chasing Cars" will take a lot of forgetting. The big highlight for me from the original band tonight was "Knocking on Heavens Door" and Fat Bob Tom Jones with "Keep Your Hat On" was untrue. Dale's guitar work on "Alright Now" beggared belief - and "Sex on Fire" took the bloody roof off!

Sharon was bouncing for "Highway to Hell" as I knew she would be! "Move it - Move it" was an interesting twist and was received as well as it was performed. Thank you all so much for tonight - still so high from it, I won't sleep till it gets light! Walter's drumming was unbelievable. Mark T and David not only add to the overall performance but contributed greatly - this is a true Band - a group of musicians who are all and everyone capable of going it alone, but who all gel when together. We love "UNTOLD" and are probably their biggest fans!"

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Saturday 25th March

"Graham Henderson Experience"

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Greenfield Will Rock You!



With only three weeks to go, students and staff at Greenfield Community College are working flat out, recreating the magic of the giant hit musical 'We Will Rock You - for schools'.

'The time is the future, in a place that was once called Earth. Globalisation is complete. Everywhere, the kids watch the same movies, wear the same fashions and think the same thoughts. It's a safe, happy, 'Ga Ga' world. Unless you're a rebel. Unless you want to rock. On iplanet all the musical instruments are banned. The company computers generate tunes and everybody downloads them. It is an age of boy bands and of girl bands. Of boy and girl bands. Of girl bands with a couple of boys in them that look like girls anyway. Nothing is left to chance, hits are scheduled years in advance...'

With Ben Elton's hilarious plot line and live performances of Queen's classic hits, this production will get you rocking in your seats! Tickets are on sale now, priced £5.00 and £2.50, available from Greenfield Community College, Aycliffe campus school office. Show dates 4th, 5th & 6th April. Curtain up at 7.00pm. Come along and have a great evening. Please contact The Performing Arts Department on 01325 300378.

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Scanner Appeal Needs Support of Everyone

Tireless charity campaigner Syd Howarth MBE has appealed for people throughout the Aycliffe area to help raise £2.5 million to buy two state-of-the-art MRI scanners to improve medical services for patients in our area. The magnetic resonance imaging machines will be sited in Darlington and Bishop Auckland hospitals and replace 18-year-old machines which the National Health Service Trust currently pays around £1 million per year to lease. Businessman Syd, widely-regarded as 'Mr Newton Aycliffe' and the man who mooted the campaign to acquire the new equipment, said this week: "It's a no-brainer. This appeal will not only improve scanning services for people in a large area of the county but also save the NHS a massive amount of money." Newton News editor Syd was alerted to the need for action over a year ago when a reader reported 'alarming

information' on the deal regarding the leasing of scanning equipment to Darlington Memorial Hospital by a private finance company. Syd began to investigate and discovered the scanners would originally have cost less than £800,000 to buy and that the £1 million now being spent annually on leasing the machines could, he was informed, pay for 40 extra nurses. Former Rotary District Governor Syd knew that, thanks to a highly successful public appeal, the Rotary Club of Middlesbrough had recently raised £1 million to buy a scanner for James Cook Hospital in just ten months. Because of its reputation for supporting deserving community causes, he approached the Rotary Club in Darlington with a view to launching a similar campaign. Club members have supported the town's Memorial Hospital since the days of George VI

and readily agreed.

Rotarian and Durham's Deputy Lieutenant, Alastair MacConachie stepped in and took the lead, committing to help rally fellow Rotary members, businesses and the wider community to ensure County Durham & Darlington NHS Trust was at the forefront of radiology nationwide - saving lives through early diagnosis, particularly in cardiology and many types of cancers. Talks were held with the NHS Trust and the campaign was officially launched on February 7th at Darlington Memorial Hospital. "The new scanners will put Darlington and Bishop Auckland at the top of the league in terms of technology that aids early diagnosis which will benefit every member of the community," said Syd. His own Rotary Club at Newton Aycliffe has agreed to support the project and other local Rotary Clubs are confidently expected to back the appeal for funds. Syd added: "We now need the support of everyone in the Darlington, Durham and Bishop Auckland hospital areas to help by making individual donations, supporting fund-raising events, getting their organisations and groups to raise cash and by leaving legacies."

by Ron Eyley



Town Centre Observation

Dear Sir,
The main entrance to our town centre is nearly complete and it's nice to have the clock back and working although some will disagree - either regarding the chimers, or the mismatched brickwork, or even the decal! Heyho, can't please everyone. When viewed from Stephenson Way, to the right we have the eyesore of the bins at the rear of the Thames Centre shops. Are these to be left or are there plans to hide them from view - perhaps behind a wall/fence or shrubbery? Looking to the left (although I am aware this is an area where work presently continues), one is immediately drawn to the very necessary, but extremely ugly, metalwork of the Leisure Centre fire escape! Are there any plans to disguise this, perhaps with the use of banners advertising the Centre? On the subjects of signage I note it reads "Newton Aycliffe Library and Leisure Centre". Since the Leisure Centre occupied the site long before having to share it with the Library, surely the wording is the wrong way round? (Name & address supplied)

Stiller on Recruitment Drive

Newton Aycliffe family business Stiller Warehousing and Distribution is on a new recruitment drive after its latest expansion. Stiller has completed a new 40,000 sq. ft. warehouse at its huge 20 acre site on Aycliffe Business Park, costing £750,000. The new development, standing 10 metres tall, is an extension to an existing 40,000 sq. ft. unit, opened in September 2015, and further increases Stiller's warehousing capabilities, providing space for another 5,500 pallets.

The firm, currently employs 138 people, is now looking to create 10 new jobs as part of its latest expansion. Managing director Matthew Stiller said: "We're on the lookout for keen and able warehouse staff to support some new clients planned to occupy this new unit. It's another exciting development for us after a number of significant investments over the last few years as the business has grown steadily." Project managed by Darlington-based ADG Architects with civil engineering support from Durham-based BDN, its main contractor is Hall Construction, based at nearby Rushyford,



which awarded Aycliffe-based SCH Site Services a project to fabricate and erect its frame using 90 tonnes of steel. Matthew Stiller added: "We're very proud of the fact we have used local companies to build this new development, which is supporting local jobs. The new building will include new racking and Very Narrow Aisle forklifts, and will be much more space-efficient, providing us with storage for more than 5,500 pallets." The new warehouse takes Stiller's recent investments in equipment, people and property

to more than £6.4m in the last three years. More about Stiller: www.stiller.co.uk

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St Clare's Flash Mob in Tesco & Messy Church



Tesco shoppers had a big surprise on Saturday 4th March when a Flash Mob was staged by SHINE Children's Church and Community Choir and members of the Parish churches. A total of 54 singers broke into the song 'Reach for the Stars' in the middle of Tesco as part of the Talking Jesus weekend. SHINE choir decided to do what they do best and entertained a large crowd with their energy and enthusiasm. The choir, a mixture of boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 16 years of age, delighted visiting Bishop Geoff with their passion and energy. Commenting later he said how wonderful it was to see the choir singing Jesus in the heart of the community and in the middle of the every day act of shopping. He congratulated the choir team on doing such a fantastic job and wished them every strength as they continued their work.

SHINE choir is based in St. Clare's Hall on a Monday evening 5-6pm and has limited spaces available. If your child would like to join please come along for a taster session or contact Helen McCormick on 07716 801262. The club is FREE and a great way for children to meet new friends and develop a range of skills. A great time was had by all who attended Messy Journey on Saturday 4th March. Amazing to share in the sharing of bread and wine that was made during the craft stations - fellowship and faith shared joyously. The Messy Service was shared with 118 people including our Talking Jesus friends Hannah and Susan and



Greenfield Arts hosted a brilliant preview event for yet another exceptional Open Art Exhibition in their gallery space this week. The exhibition boasts extraordinary local and regional talent, which includes artwork applying a range of specialist media from pen and paint to printing and collage, resulting in a delightful array of colour and texture. This year the applications were open to all manner of creatives so the exhibition is host to its first poetry and film display, something the team are very proud to promote.

The exhibition, curated by our Arts and Community Centre Co-ordinator Sophie Lewis, has brought together a selection of artwork from the local area and has encouraged artists to select a small number of pieces for display. Our Cree volunteers did a fantastic job assisting with the installation, which offers each artist space to showcase their personal collection.

The preview evening was a great success and a chance for artists and art lovers to meet and chat creating a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere. Sophie said "It was a brilliant challenge for us to work with so many pieces whilst also incorporating something very different in the poetry and film displays, but it is lovely to see it all come together and to receive so many positive comments. The aim of the exhibition is to showcase the talent and creativity within everyone, not just professionals; so it is always great to meet the artists and find out the stories behind each piece. We have even

added an interactive element which includes these stories for everyone to hear; something you will have to come down and see to experience."

The exhibition will run until Wednesday 26th April 2017 with events and workshops including a closing celebration on Wednesday 26th April where you can purchase items

from local crafters, try your hand at some of the artistic practices, hear from the artists and listen to poetry readings. There will even be the chance to see how a full exhibition comes together, with advice and guidance on hanging as well as marketing from the Greenfield Gallery team. All visitors are welcome

and activities are suitable for all ages. To enable us to manage numbers please show your interest on our online course booking system on our website: www.greenfield-arts.co.uk. If you would like any further information please contact our friendly team on 01325 379048 or email info@greenfield-arts.co.uk

Students Visit to Durham



FLOWER DEMO

Area Demonstrator and florist, Rachael Poole from Sheffield, will present an evening of flower arranging to Shildon and District Flower Club under the title 'Natural Elegance' at Shildon Civic Hall on Monday, 3rd April at 7.30pm.

Rachael is an inspirational floral demonstrator with a passion for flowers and floral display. This will be an event not to be missed for all those with a love of innovative ways of displaying flowers and foliage to delight the eye. Free to members - Visitors £5 on the door.

Fifteen Year 7 students from Woodham's More Able Academy attended Palace Green Library, Durham for two workshops, 'What is a book' and 'Witchcraft for Muggles'. These are part of Durham University's 4schools programme. The students were allowed to handle and read books which are over 400 years old, they also saw the first printed book in Europe which is 600 years

old and very delicate! They tried writing with quills and printing pages to make books. The afternoon session concentrated on using the books for research on witches in the 1600's, reading the old handwriting and language and looking at what was considered to be fact at that time. The workshops were led by two History graduates, Ross and Jen, whose enthusiasm

for the subject was very evident. The students also had a look around the museum's other exhibitions: Hearing Voices, 10,000 years of Durham and Poetry in Durham. Headteacher, Christine Forsyth, says "We hope that giving students an early opportunity to experience academic research will inspire them to achieve well in the future."

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included crafts of celebration candles, good gift plates, jewelled cups, bread making and grape pressing. Along with travelling sand play, funky foam and play doh mountains, many came forward to use our Fizzy Forgiveness Prayer Station and the Talking Jesus Photo Booth was never empty. We had a fabulous time and there are lots more pictures to share on Youth/ChildrenSt. Clare.

We invite you to our next FREE session on April 8th at 4pm which will be Palm Praise. Lots of crafts, story, song, celebration and by special request a tea of Fish Finger sandwiches! Messy Church is church for children and their grown-ups to share together.



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VITRIOLIC POLITICS

Dear Sir,
Local politics is full of vitriol and Arun Chandran's letter in the Newton News two weeks ago represents the negative side of being a councillor.

Frankly, how dare he? Whatever your political persuasion, the members of the Labour Party in Newton Aycliffe are decent honest people. I cannot think of a member of the public who works more tirelessly for others than John Clare; Kate Hopper and Eddy Adam in West Ward. They have taken huge strides in improving our area and I could list all the initiatives by every Newton Aycliffe County Councillor personally seen, but they would need a newspaper of their own!

To accuse Labour members of corruption is a blatant lie, and all those who know me will testify as to the strength of my character. In truth, the accusations are so much more bizarre when made by a man who was reported by the Northern Echo to be under investigation by the Labour Party before he left.

In my own humble view, people are tired of the circus politics and attacks. I look forward to hearing more about what independent councillors would like to actually do if re-elected and how they would intend to go about it. So far I've read nothing more than bluster. Cllr Peter L. Davies
41 Ashfield



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We Got Livin and Lost £6million

Dear Sir,
With regard to the "Keep of the Grass" letter by Cllr Derek Atkinson a few weeks ago:- When Cllr Bob Fleming was Leader of Sedgefield BC £6 million was earmarked for development in Newton Aycliffe unfortunately he missed being re-elected by just three votes and Cllr Agnes Armstrong of Spennymoor became Leader and Cllr Vince Crosby of Newton Aycliffe, Deputy Leader and the £6 million was diverted to Spennymoor instead. Sunderland Housing made a bid for the Housing and had offered the Council £25.7 million agreeing to pay the costs of consultation and a referendum which was a further £750,000. However officers and Labour Councillors set up Sedgefield Borough Homes SBH (now Livin) as an arms length company, and without going out to tender, gave all the housing and open spaces to them as a sweat-heart deal, with a £4.5 million loan and the Council paying the costs of consultation and referendum. This was all thanks to Cllr

Vince Crosby. The bid was put together by Vince, other councillors and Council staff with some of those staff ending up on the SBH Board.

The Council also handed over more land than they needed to, but this was stopped by Cllr Bob Fleming who as Leader on the Town Council challenged a lot of the green open spaces being given away to SBH (Livin).

Bob and the Town Council managed to have most of the green open spaces transferred to Durham County Council instead. Thanks Vince - another fine mess you got us into.

I would stress that when I served on Sedgefield Borough Council as an Independent I went on record as being totally opposed to giving away our Housing and open spaces to Sedgefield Borough Homes (now renamed Livin).

May I also comment on the letter "Political Criticism" and say the grant received was for Neville Community Centre and not The Cubby. Cllr Bill Blenkinsopp Independent

No Consultation on DLI Changes

Dear Sir,

In response to Cllr. Neil Foster's article on the DLI Museum, it is very obvious the elections are looming as he is trying damage limitation tactics. It is true Durham County Council DID close the DLI Museum and they closed it without public consultation, as well as filibustering by deliberately talking out the time to block debate - talking about Brussel sprouts!

At the same time they would not hear a motion supporting the County's TA's, who were and still are, facing major pay cuts. The Trustees of the DLI Museum have not carried out their purpose very well either and should have let the public know what was going on. One Trustee was made Lieutenant of the County the day after the Museum closed.

The DLI Museum had a footfall of approximately 38,000 people per annum, which apparently was not enough to keep it open. The Green Howards Museum in Richmond gets a footfall of 18,000 per annum and survives. We should also bear in mind, originally this building was designed as an Art Centre as well as a Museum, but unfortunately, this too was closed.

Mr Foster failed to say the land the Museum stands on is in a prime location in Durham City. County Hall stands just above the Museum and is being demolished shortly, which will leave a massive amount of building land available. County Hall will be demolished, after DCC spend thousands on a new café.

The Somme Exhibition which was first listed as a free event, was £7.50 per adult and £6.50 per child over 5 years of age. Apparently this turned out to be a bit of a flop, but seems to have been glossed over. That's a lot of money, when you could get into the Museum and see the whole collection for £4.50.

The Gala Theatre hosted an event, as well as other exhibitions at Palace Green, and the question must be asked - why could this not all take place at the Museum? The amount of advertising that

has gone on over the last year promoting the DLI exhibitions is second to none. The original Museum was hardly ever advertised - a lovely building set in great countryside.

Mr Foster also mentions travelling exhibitions, but omits to say it is at a charge of £30 for an educator, who will visit a community venue with artefacts and give a talk which lasts an hour. There were educational facilities in the Museum so why could they not have been used?

DCC stated the Museum was not fit for purpose and that it would cost too much to get it up to scratch. We looked at the survey, and there were no structural problems. The amount of money spent on cabinets alone, to display the medals at Palace Green was £75,000 at least and that's without any monies spent in transporting and housing the items from the museum. This money should have been spent on the original Museum. The question should be asked why the DCC are in bed with the University on this matter? The University have the most expensive part of the collection (medals), why are they involved? Durham is a University City, Universities need land and guess where our DLI Museum stands. Seven Hills, "state of the art" storage facility, where thousands of pounds have been spent is the old Rothman's Cigarette Factory, in the middle of an Industrial Estate. It is open only 10 hours a week and you have to book to see special items. What about those of us who do not know what we want to see? It is much more educational to view items displayed correctly in a real museum. Cllr. Foster is wrong. One DCC councillor when asked what about the ashes that are scattered all over the grounds of the DLI Museum, said "a few sods of grass" would be taken up to the Cathedral. The ashes of former DLI soldiers and their families aren't just in one place at the beautiful grounds of the Museum, they are all over. What about them?

Committee of The Faithful Durhams

Dynamic Durham Supercops Aim for Shooting Galleries

Dear Sir,

I was always of the belief that the use and supply of certain drugs such as Cannabis, Cocaine, Heroin etc. were prohibited in law under British legislation and that our Constabulary were charged with upholding the law. As a strong supporter of our law and order services I feel dismayed by the stance of our Chief Constable and Police Commissioner over proposed Heroin Shooting Galleries at a cost of allegedly £15k per addict. I am no expert but I think ending up on hard drugs is a progression from so called soft drugs and ignoring this is a perilous exercise which is fraught with danger. I would like to ask where are the funds coming from to provide this?

Last year Cannabis was talked about in such a way that police had to later issue statements denying cannabis was to be made legal. We are told that year on year crime and anti-social behaviour has been falling yet local communities across Co. Durham are being plagued by illegal mini motos and quad bikes, underage drinking etc. I am told that action is not being taken because of a lack of police. As a result one police force in the country give most attention to the highest number of calls and priority is targeted towards need. The advice seems to be "Dial 101" and hope your neighbours ring too. Cllr. Ken Robson

Legal - But is it Right?

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank Cllr Paul Kjenstad for his recent letter. I never asked him to consider resigning, as it would cause another unnecessary costly by-election.

I assumed he would not be standing this time around. and the fact he has outed himself is his choice.

It may be legal for him to stand because you work at a shop in Newton Aycliffe, but if he is living in Darlington is it the right thing to do? He and the local Labour Party Branch clearly think so, but somehow I think the residents of Byerley Park, Horndale and Cobblers Hall, especially the Labour Voters in that Ward, would rather have a candidate who lives in the Town.

Voters don't like being taken for granted and I suspect that in that Ward in May, they will chose to punish Labour for putting up someone who lives in Darlington, to stand in their Ward, for our Town Council.

I don't think this will bring in votes for Labour nor reflect any credit on them, but rather damage the chances of all the Labour candidates in that ward. It

is courageous but misses the point.

Councillors are there to serve the public, not the public there to serve councillors. Thanks Paul for giving me credit for trying to get the Simpature Park footpaths repaired. Perhaps if we hadn't had four unnecessary By elections within one year that money could have been spent on repairs. But at least I tried to do something about them.

Cllr Arun Chandran

Red Squirrels Were Once Called Pests

Dear Editor,

Over the last weeks, grey squirrels have been scapegoated again for the decline of the red squirrel. Horrific plans to kill grey squirrels have even been announced. But it is people, and not grey squirrels, who are largely responsible for the decline in red squirrel numbers.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was red squirrels who were being treated as 'pests' and slaughtered in their thousands. A series of harsh winters and disease epidemics reduced red squirrel numbers even further. According to a Bristol University report, there is little evidence that killing grey squirrels is the best way of conserving red ones. But in any case, grey squirrels are just as capable of suffering as their red counterparts. All animals deserve to live, whether they are a well-loved species - like the red squirrel - or considered 'pests'.

There are many humane ways of deterring unwelcome animals, including squirrels, and free advice sheets can be ordered from Animal Aid by phoning 01732 364546 or emailing info@animalaid.org.uk

DISGUSTING DOG OWNERS

Dear Sir,

Will those dog owners who choose to walk their pets through Hylton Close, refrain from allowing them to foul the pavement/gardens without clearing up the mess.

These people know who they are, but let them be assured, that they are being watched, and if spotted, will be reported to the local Dog Warden.

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Sci-fi and Steampunk

A brand new event for Sci-fi and Steampunk fans is taking place at Locomotion: The National Railway Museum at Shildon on Saturday March 25 and Sunday March 26, 2017.

Organised by the Film & TV Model Club, "Fantazmagoria" aims to bring together film & TV collectables, models, Steampunk, art, comic books, war games and much more – under one roof.

Visitors will be able to browse displays and demonstrations by clubs and individual exhibitors, plus check out a range of traders offering collectables, costumes, jewellery, art and more.

Live music on the Saturday of the event will be provided by Kitchy Retro. Visitors will also be able to get on board cabs of selected steam locomotives, and take a steam train ride behind Furness Railway No. 20, the oldest standard gauge locomotive still operating in the UK.

The Museum at Shildon is open from 10am to 5pm daily. Parking and admission are free of charge. Please note that there is a charge for steam train rides.

For more information, please call the museum team on 01388 777999.

STUDENTS EXCEL IN RAINBOW BAKE OFF



Two students from Greenfield Community College travelled to London's Clapton Girls Academy to compete in the final of the 'Educate and Celebrate Great Rainbow Bake off 2017'.

The students were among the ten teams of finalists in the nationwide competition proving that promoting equality is a piece of cake! The finalists were chosen from over 300 entries and baked to the theme of Power for Good and PHSE/Law to celebrate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans

History Month UK. Judging was actress Alicya Eyo from Bad Girls and Emmerdale, and Scott Nunn editor of Gay Star News, they were impressed with all the entries and loved the message the finalists were sending to all.

Assistant Head Teacher Ms Davis expressed how proud she was to hear the students confidently talking to London Live about LGBT inclusion and being superb role models to the Primary Schools that were also involved. The competition was fierce and all cakes made were excellent. Although the girls did not win they were in great spirits and had a thoroughly fantastic experience. They were interviewed by a number of journalists and spoke passionately about equality.

Educate & Celebrate is an Ofsted and DFE recognised Best Practice Programme that gives staff, students, parents and governors the confidence and strategies to implement an LGBT + Inclusive curriculum to successfully eradicate homophobia, biphobia and transphobia from our schools and communities.

Greenfield Community College have been part of the best practice programme which invites teachers, students, parents and governors to partake in whole school change through training, policy, curriculum, community and environment giving opportunities to reflect upon their experiences. They currently hold Silver Award as a best practise school.

'METIS' AT THE SCOUT CENTRE

METIS is a local 5 piece band, bringing you classics from brit pop, indie and rock bands up to recent tracks as well as their own originals!

This will be their first gig of the year. Who's going to join them on Saturday 18th march? They are live at the Scouts Centre in Newton Aycliffe. Tickets are just £3 each (£2 for children) available from METIS, the club or on the door on the night. They are limited so don't delay! They've been working so hard these past two months perfecting their set list and working on some awesome originals to perform to you on the night.

The Scout centre is also hosting a Northern Soul Night on Saturday the 15th of April at 7:30pm. Tickets are £3 and will be available on the door.

We treat our floor with 'Sliperine' to give you a good dancing surface so we would appreciate it if you could not use talc – it's a nightmare to clean off!

Northern Soul will be a regular event at the Scout Centre dates will be published on our Facebook page shortly.

Our AGM will be on Wednesday 19th April at 7:00pm all current members are welcome. If anyone would like to join the committee to help run the Association please see the notice board at our Social club – names and nominees required. Please note that this is a demanding role and you will be expected to partake in the everyday running of the club- everything from un-blocking the toilet to organising an event and everything in between.

We hope to see you at our events. All the profits are used to run and maintain the Scout centre which is used by up to 100 young people each week for their scouting/brownie meetings.

MP Phil Visits Gestamp to Mark Apprenticeship Week

To mark National Apprenticeship Week, Phil Wilson MP visited Gestamp Tallent to learn more about the benefits apprenticeships offer to both business and apprentices.

The visit began with an impressive presentation from first year Commercial Apprentice Emma Beauchamp.

Emma detailed the importance of apprenticeships to Gestamp Tallent and the successes many enjoyed over the years. She highlighted the benefits apprenticeships can have for a business, especially during the national shortage of engineers, and how it tackles youth unemployment.

Emma said: "My Apprenticeship at Gestamp Tallent not only boosted my confidence but also showed me the vast amount of opportunities available to me in the future. Everyone, no matter where they are in the company or what they do, are always happy to help and mentor me to be the best I can be. I couldn't think of a better way, or place, to start my career."

Throughout the visit, Phil watched Technical apprentices deliver presentations to one another, met Maintenance apprentices in training, and saw apprentices at work, showing apprentices are an integral part of Gestamp.

With 43 apprentices, as well as 86 press setters and 35 welders currently upskilling, the value placed upon workforce development and on investment in employees was made clear to Mr Wilson. But Gestamp doesn't just invest in their own apprentices and staff, along with Hitachi, Gestamp are currently in a mentoring programme at the UTC, helping facilitate and support students.

David Pearson, from Gestamp said: "Apprenticeships prove to us year on year that they are the ideal platform on which our employees can build their careers and we will continue to provide major career opportunities for young



Gestamp apprentices and tutors with Phil Wilson MP, Emma Beauchamp and David Pearson

people. The Apprenticeship programmes allow us to specify how the training is structured to ensure we give apprentices the skills required to be successful in their future roles while ensuring the business has the skill base to cover current and future opportunities."

Following the visit Mr Wilson said, "National Apprenticeship Week brings

employers and apprentices together to celebrate the success of apprenticeships. Gestamp Tallent is great example of the benefits offered, and the success apprentices can achieve. Apprenticeships are not only important for businesses, but offer a valuable opportunity for young people to develop their skills and achieve success in a variety of different fields."

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Star Radio Visit School



Tune into Star Radio at 12noon till 2pm this Sunday 19th, to hear Year 6 pupils from Stephenson Way Academy on The Sunday Takeover Show. They worked with Star Radio staff a few weeks ago on a special Media Day to compile their own reviews on their favourite books, films, music, sports and much more, including their own interviews with staff.

"The pupils of Stephenson Way Academy should be very proud of themselves, they worked so hard in putting their own show together, it's a great listen!" say's Lesley Boyle, who heads up Star Academy for Star Radio. Tune into Star Radio on 103.2FM or online at <http://www.starradio.co.uk/> For more information on having Star Radio work with your children to create their own show at school, whether Primary or Secondary, please contact Lesley Boyle on lesley.boyle@thisisstar.co.uk

Film Show

The "FEEL GOOD FILM SHOW" at St Clare's Church on TUESDAY 21st MARCH features the romantic musical "BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY MOON" This sequel to "On Moonlight Bay" again stars Doris Day and Gordon MacRae and their on/off romance; along with other family crises mainly caused by an imaginative little brother. Songs including "By the Light" "Aint We Got Fun" and "If You Were the Only Girl" make it a real FEEL GOOD FILM. Tea and coffee will be served at 1pm, included in the £2.00, the film starts at 1.15pm.

A variety of chairs are provided for your comfort, and tables so that you can bring a spot of lunch to eat while you enjoy a great film in friendly company. Everyone is most welcome.

For further details contact Ric Hargreaves 01325 316755.



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Local Counselling Service

Three women sharing the same vision to create a mental health service, bespoke to each individual, have set up a service in Shildon with no funding other than from clients. A funded service needs targets and criteria which clients must meet before they can be offered a place on a waiting list, which can sometimes take 8 months.

Lynsey Curry, Maddy Hauxwell and Andrea Bartlett wanted to give them another choice so they founded "One Place Together".

From their own bad experiences of counselling and seeing the struggles people faced, trying to access help adequate for their needs, they decided to do something about it and enrolled on a college course where they all met. They completed a counselling diploma at Bishop Auckland College, which was quite tough as they were mature students with jobs and family to juggle along with studies. The trio then signed up to do a Foundation Degree in Counselling run by Sunderland University accessed at Bishop Auckland College which was very convenient. In addition they had to fit in 100 hours of voluntary work as part on the criteria. After completing the



Lynsey Curry, Maddy Hauxwell and Andrea Bartlett

Degree they were given the opportunity to top up to a full honours travelling to Sunderland to get extra knowledge and achievement. This is when they started to talk about setting up their own practice. "We wanted to open our doors to anyone who wanted to access mental health therapies and rather than all work separately as private therapists work in one place, together.

As a private practice there are overheads to cover and they need paying for their time and expertise. As there are three counsellors all working from the same premises the overheads such as rent, heating, water and electric are all shared out meaning they

can reflect this in the price offered to the client. They can also see three times more clients so there is no waiting list.

"Clients can have a free, no obligation, initial appointment, to see for themselves who we are, where we are and what to expect from counselling. We hope this will help the clients to take that step and seek the support they need". said Mandy.

OPT is at Dabble Duck Way in Shildon. Email: contact_us@oneplacetogogether.co.uk - Telephone 07596 672773 - Website: www.oneplacetogogether.co.uk - Twitter: [oneplace2gether](https://twitter.com/oneplace2gether) - Facebook: One Place Together - Instagram: [oneplacetogogether](https://www.instagram.com/oneplacetogogether)

Lynsey Curry (31) Spennymoor suffered anxiety throughout her life. At the age of 16 she saw her doctor and broke down in tears so he gave her antidepressants. She felt a failure and was put on a waiting list to see a counsellor. It was not the best experience and after 3 appointments she decided not to go back.

When having a baby it was put down to baby blues, but she knew it was something more. She returned to the doctors, with antidepressants and on the list for counselling again which she thought she could do better herself. In her middle 20's with a daughter starting school, no job Lynsey knew it is time to do something with her life so went to college and into counselling.

Andrea Bartlett (39) from Spennymoor, while working as a shift manager at McDonalds was involved in an armed robbery, held at knife point and made to hand over cash from the till. This is where her counselling journey began as this event changed her life. She got back to normal life, being a mother to two children, a wife, trudging to work doing dead end jobs. Eight years later and after a particularly difficult time in one of my jobs

I sat down with my husband and he said he would support me in whatever I needed to do to make

me happy so I decided to do something about it and signed up for a night course which was an introduction to counselling.

Madeleine Hauxwell (45) born in York now lives in Newton Aycliffe with her husband, 2 children and various pets. In her early career she worked in horse racing for 20 years and at one time was an apprentice jockey. Her life experiences have been extreme taking her all over the world, and times which have been dark, abusive and challenging, which led her to fight for her life (literally). "Counselling was something that I have never been offered and my attitude towards it was 'how can someone who hasn't been through my life experiences possibly understand what I'm going through' said Madeline.

Seeing her family and friends suffering with different issues and palmed off with tablets, Maddy began to feel that there must be a better way of helping people. Her counsellor journey began with a placement with the RSACC (rape and sexual assault crisis centre). It takes a lot of courage for a person to seek help and when they do, they usually need it there and then and that is why myself and my colleagues have decided to set up OPT with an aim to help people get the help they need immediately.

Newton Press Help MRI Scanners Appeal

The £2.5 million appeal to buy two state-of-the-art MRI scanners for hospitals in Darlington and Bishop Auckland is to be given an eye-catching marketing logo – and it's been designed and donated by a Newton Aycliffe company.

The colourful logo is the work of the design team at Newton Press and will be used by County Durham and Darlington NHS Trust as part of its campaign to replace scanning equipment that is now 18 years old. Newton News Editor, Syd Howarth, said this week: "We are delighted to be playing a role in a project that will clearly benefit many people in this part of the world. We wish the local NHS appeal co-ordinators every success in their fund-raising efforts." The new magnetic resonance



imaging scanners will put Darlington and Bishop Auckland at the top of the league in terms of technology that aids life-saving early diagnosis of conditions in such areas as cardiology and many types of cancers. The advanced MRI technology of the new scanners will most likely be offered to patients outside our area and could generate an income to our Trust.

Snap-happy Camera Course in Aycliffe

Free, weekly, guided, digital photography workshops are starting up at Woodham Community Centre from Wednesday 22nd March, 9.30am - 11.00am for 9 weeks.

Wellbeing for Life Health Trainers have organised this informal group to help people with an interest in developing photography skills including uploading and using images.

Mel Hannant, Health Trainer says "Learning new skills, connecting with people and physical activity all help improve your health and wellbeing so bring your phone, tablet, camera or any other photography taking device and learn how to develop and create the perfect images and then edit them on a PC or laptop.

The workshops also include exploring the local area as an inspiration for imagery so will include some gentle exercise and a chance to chat to other members. Free refreshments are also available"

The Wellbeing for Life service provides support to people to live well in County Durham, by helping to address the factors which influence their health and build their capacity to be independent, resilient and maintain good health for themselves and those around them.

Wellbeing for Life runs courses in the community and Health Trainers support people on a 1-1 basis to enable people to be independent, resilient and maintain good health for themselves and those around them.

HAVE YOU GOT NEWS FOR US?

We are always interested in local news stories. We like to feature good news and interesting items on achievements & community service

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Compiled by
County Councillor
John Clare

This week's important meeting was the DCC Cabinet meeting. You will be interested in the new dog control powers and April's tax credit changes, and may want to visit the DLI exhibition at Palace Green. Internet links to the articles below are at bit.ly/CNB15317

COUNCIL
• DCC Cabinet meeting report
• DCC Leader Simon Henig explains the new dog control powers
• Lumière to be bigger than ever
• New summer opening hours for HWRCs
• Good news for residents worried about speeding
• A price on our heads
• GAMP Board meeting report
• Latest Roadworks information
COMMUNITY
• NELEP publishes revised

economic plan for north-east.
• Jobs growth in County Durham higher than UK average

• Construction starts on £7.4m science park expansion
• Durham Constabulary remains the country's top Police Force
• Police seat belt enforcement campaign
• Are you aware of the tax credit changes in April?
• DLI Collection Gallery – 'Courage, Comrades, Community' – opens at Durham University's Palace Green Library, Mondays, noon to 4:45pm, and Tuesday to Sunday, 10am-4:45pm
• 'Terrific Tiles' for the 5-11s at the Durham Oriental Museum, Saturday 25 March, 1-3pm
• FantaZmagoria at the Locomotion Museum Shildon, 10am-4pm, 24-26 March

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'Thank you' Aycliffe Rotarians

Newton Aycliffe Rotarians have received two letters of thanks from organisations to which they have recently given financial support.

David Hastings, Secretary to the Durham Branch of the RNLI, who recently spoke to the club about his experiences of being saved at sea, has told members: "The RNLI can only save lives with the help of groups like yours."

And Sam Vieira, Community Funding Executive for Prostate Cancer UK, has written to say: "By 2030, prostate cancer is predicted to be the most common cancer or all and yet research into this disease is badly underfunded."

Rotary President Nora Scott said this week: "We try to support as many charities and deserving causes as we can. It's great to know our efforts are appreciated."

Mother's Day Sunday Lunch at the **Eden Arms Hotel** on *26th March 2017*

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DISC Win Heart of Community Award



Lindsey Smith

A councillor praised a Newton Aycliffe-based charity DISC after it won a prestigious award proving it was at the "Heart of the Community". County Councillor John Clare was one of the judges at Aycliffe Business Park's "Make Your Mark" awards at which DISC won the Heart of the Community Category. Cllr Clare said: "As one of the judges, I was impressed by the depth and the sheer scale of the work DISC is doing with young people. And perhaps the most impressive thing of all was Lindsey Smith's acceptance speech, in which her commitment and care were clear for all to see. The award celebrates excellence in corporate, social and ethical activity. DISC with head offices at Horndale Avenue on Aycliffe Business Park, won the award for work undertaken by its education service which provides tailored support programmes to students, recently recognised as Grade 1 Outstanding by Ofsted.

Lindsey Smith, Senior Team Leader at the charity, said: "It was a very proud moment when the award was announced. This was the first year we have entered the Make Your Mark awards, and to be shortlisted alongside some much larger organisations was an achievement in itself; to win was simply outstanding! DISC's Chief Executive Officer Paul Townsley said: "Achieving the Heart of the Community Award is another affirmation of the excellent work undertaken by DISC and I congratulate everyone in the Education Services team. We're currently speaking to several local businesses about how they can help us develop more work experience positions for our students, and we'd love to hear from any Aycliffe business that may be interested in helping." For more information on the Education Service at DISC, please visit <http://www.disc-vol.org.uk/services/employment-training-and-education/>

DAFFODIL COFFEE MORNING

Great Aycliffe Mothers' Union will be hosting their annual spring "Daffodil Coffee Morning" on Saturday March 25th, 10.00am till noon at St. Clare's Church in the town centre. Along with bacon butties and goodies from the kitchen on sale, there is a well stocked home made cake stall. We have a fantastic raffle with some lovely prizes, a jewellery stall and a children's lucky dip. Children can come along and buy a "Mother's Day gift. The icing on the cake for your entertainment on this day, will be the fabulous Shine and Community Choir direct from their "Flash Mob" success in Tesco. Please come along and help us raise funds for St. Clare's Church which gives so much to our community. Entrance is free, bring as many friends as you want, it will be lovely to see you all.

Beauty Contestant Helps Butterwick Hospice

Miss North East GB is back! The search for entrants for this year's event spread across the region to select the winners of four local titles. Zoe Efthymiadou (18) is one of 20 Lucky ladies selected to be a finalist in this year's fantastic 1920's themed event. She will be representing Durham and is hoping to walk away with the Miss Durham GB crown and secure her place in the Miss Great Britain final.

As part of the competition the girls in the Durham and Teesside area are raising money for Butterwick Hospice for babies, children and young adults. The Hospice provides specialist palliative care to babies, Children and young adults with life limiting illnesses with support for their families. Zoe will be doing a sponsored walk in the Lake District in April and holding a charity event at Woodham Golf and Country Club on 31st May 2017 at 7pm. A fantastic night full of entertainment from brilliant vocal artists including

24hr Defibrillator Installed at Woodham Community Centre

The first 24 hour Public Access Defibrillator in Newton Aycliffe was fitted to the outside of Woodham Village Community Centre this week. It will provide potential lifesaving help to the wider community serving the surrounding Church's, Dentist, Shops, Post Office, Huntsman Pub, and of course the Public. This unit is the first of several new units that will help fill a gap in provision found on the Town, especially to the West and North.

The project is a great example of all parts of our community coming together to help our Emergency Services. Funding came from Great Aycliffe and Middridge Area Action Partnerships Crime and Community Safety priority, generous public support especially Woodham and Middridge, County Councillors John Clare, Mike Dixon, and Joan Gray, Great Aycliffe Town Council, The PCP, and Greenfield Community College. Local business has also contributed



generously and thanks go to The Village Pharmacy, Woodham Dentists, The Huntsman Pub, Reds Chip Shop, and Lagoon Salon. Other outdoor units will be installed in the next few weeks at The PCP Centre, Greenfield Community College, and the Bay Horse Pub Middridge. An internal unit will be held inside the Greenfield Store, and a spare unit will be held by Woodham Community Centre for use at any public event. The public are becoming more aware of how these defibrillators can help save

lives. The "Killer Facts" are that survival rates after eight minutes with only CPR (Chest Compressions) are less than 5%, yet with a defibrillator being used within a few minutes this could go up to 70%. Over 100,000 people every

year in the UK, die from heart attacks, young, old, fit, unfit. Every family knows of someone who has suffered a heart attack. Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue service have given us tremendous help with this project. They point out that in the vital "Chain of Survival" Call emergency service, give CPR, use defibrillator, hand over to the professionals - that time is so important!

Anyone experiencing a potential heart attack event should telephone the emergency services giving their location (if you are not sure and can see a lamp post give them the number). If you are near a 24 hour defibrillator unit they will direct you to it and provide a code to open the

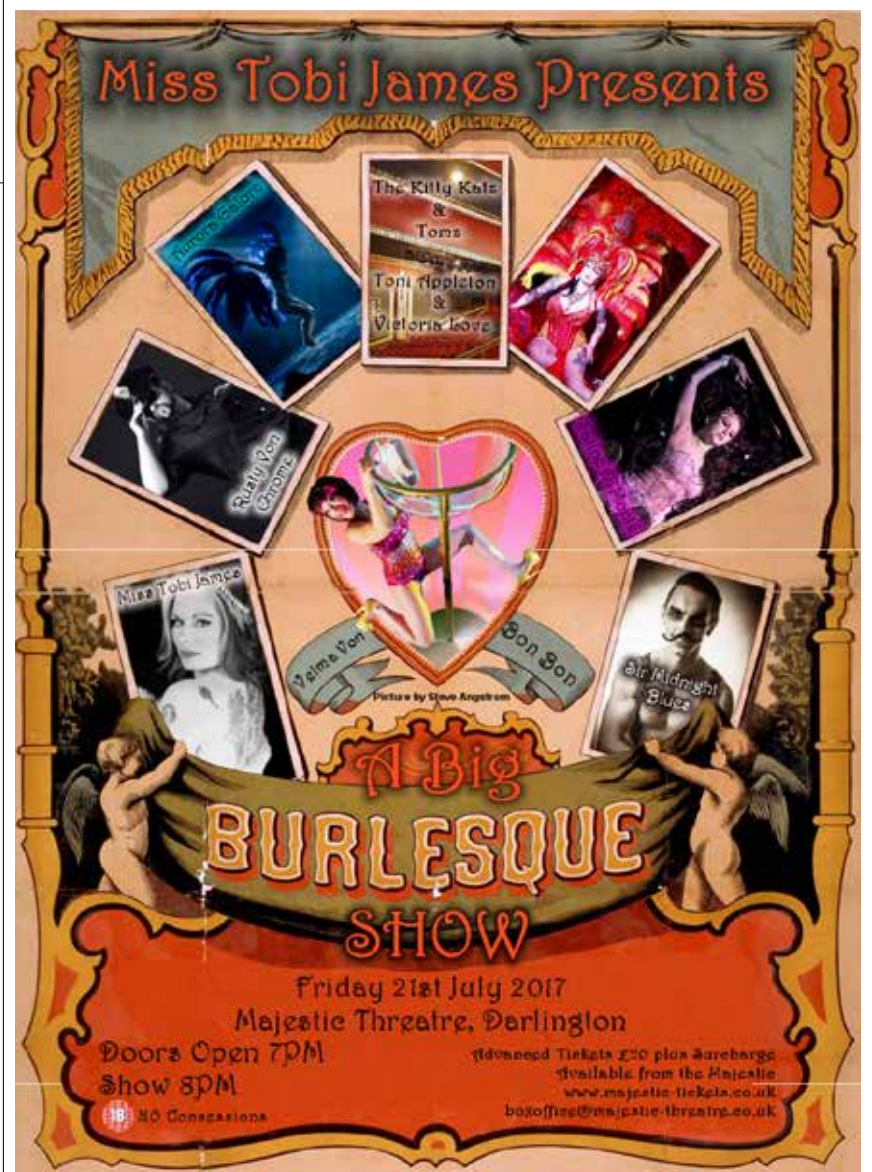
box. As such as fitting more units is important, public awareness of the need, use, and location of units is equally important. Our volunteers will be running taster awareness events at several locations soon to help promote awareness of defibrillators and health matters, and encouraging people to join 250 free CPR and Defibrillator training places we have organised with Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service. Every public building and school should have these units and hopefully more publicity will help spur others on. For further information Contact David Sutton-Lloyd 01325 316144. woodham.community@gmail.com

Ground Level 5" Gauge Main Line Association



The National Railway Museum at Shildon is delighted to welcome the Ground Level 5" Gauge Main Line Association for a shunting demonstration event from Friday 17th March to Sunday 19th March, 2017. The Ground Level 5" Gauge Main Line (GL5) Association

focuses on realistic railway operations in ground level 5" gauge. GL5 Association members model British main line railways. The shunting demonstration event will take place in Locomotion's Collection Building - and visitors will be able to see ground level 5" gauge steam and diesel locomotives operated against a backdrop of the museum's standard gauge collection! The museum will be open from 10am to 4pm throughout the event, and admission and parking are free of charge. For more information, please call Locomotion: The NRM at Shildon on 01388 777999.



Chrissy and Ian James. Pie and peas will be served with super raffle prizes on offer including a spar for 2 at Rockliffe Hall, 2 VUE cinema tickets, meals in various restaurants, campers, Replay hairdressers cut and blow-dry worth £45 and many more excellent prizes. Tickets are only £7 each tickets - purchased from Woodham Golf and Country Club. Tel: (01325) 318454 A night not to be missed, with a welcoming atmosphere. Please join us to help raise funds for a wonderful and meaningful cause.



Japanese Students Visit UTC



On the 9th March, the UTC welcomed students from a technical college in Japan. The college students came to Britain with the aim to see what British engineering colleges are like.

The students entered the UTC with a warm welcome from the principle, Tom Dower, and then they were quickly escorted to the engineering hall where the tour began. The UTC Year 10s were split into pairs who were designated to six visitors.

One particular group explained how their

tour went:

"They were very curious to see what it was like here one person in particular got excited when he saw a familiar piece of equipment."

"It was very fun to talk to them they had great understanding of what we were saying." After a quick tour of the building, the students took a picture, thanked the UTC for their hospitality, and departed to go to London.

Article penned by members of the UTC Journalism Club: Arial Latue and Alex Paterson Year 10

Antiques T.V. Star Returns to Aycliffe

Top television antiques expert David Harper will be back in Woodham next month to help local Rotarians, their families and friends raise cash for charity.

During a special evening at the Golf Club on April 7, he will combine valuation of interesting items brought in by members and guests with anecdotes about his life in the antiques trade.

"We are delighted that David has agreed to come back again. Last year's event was a very successful evening in every respect," said organizer Rtn. Roger Curtis this week.

This year's event is open to members of the public and starts at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £22.50 and include a carvery meal and dessert with vegetarian options.

They are available from Roger via e-mail - r224curtis@btinternet.com - or mobile 07484 603827 or 01325 314854.

Proceeds will be used to raise funds for the Leprosy Mission and other Rotary charities



GREAT BRITISH DANCE OFF



Woodham Academy's Dance Academy have been practising for many performances and competitions this spring. The first major competition was in Warrington at the Pyramid Parr Hall, a venue that is new to the students. The Great Big Dance Off is a competition that the Dance Academy enter each year and thoroughly enjoy. It is a national competition where smaller regional heats show off local talents that compete for a place in the national final.

Dance Academy practise on a Wednesday after school where their PE teacher, Miss Kent, and local dance teacher, Kay Clarey, of Joanne Banks Dancers, teaches them dances. They are extremely dedicated and rehearse all of their dances both in school and out of school. The styles of dance differ for each group and as a school we try to keep them up beat and fun.

Thursday 9th March, 23 students from Woodham Dance Academy set off at 7.30am and made the two and a half hour journey across the country to Warrington. They arrived at the Pyramid Parr Hall as one of the first schools ready to rehearse. The rehearsal performance showed how hard the girls had worked as the performance was near perfect. After minor alterations and a lot of team talks, the students were taken to the dressing rooms where they prepared for the evening show.

During the competition there were 16 performances from a range of schools that varied from primary students to KS5 students. Woodham performed the KS3 piece first, a fun lively Latin American style jive to the music Runaway Baby by Bruno Mars. This was a dance that received an extremely positive welcome from the audience and left the students with a huge sense of achievement after a fabulous performance.

The penultimate performance saw Woodham's Dance Academy KS4 performance.

A piece choreographed by Kay Clarey from Joanne Banks Dancers. This 90's inspired dance raised the roof and saw the students finish in second place.

This has left the students even more determined to practice for Woodham Academy's Dance Showcase, which is held at Woodham on Thursday 30th March. Both pieces that were performed at the Great Big Dance Off will be performed in the Dance Showcase. Tickets are available from Woodham Academy (01325 300328).

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Students Learn About Life Choices



Year 8 students at Greenfield Community College participated in an interesting and informative day, as students from the Aycliffe and Sunnydale campuses came together to experience a number of workshops led by "Prison Me No Way".

Students were engaged and intrigued to learn about prison life and how the wrong choices they may make in the future can take away their right to freedom. The facilitators held the interest of the students throughout the day and chose several students at

the end who had made a valuable contribution and awarded them prizes.

We are thankful to GAMP who provided the funding to make the event happen. It is vital for students to start thinking about their futures and to be aware that they are in control of the choices they make in life. This helps them to become responsible young people who are prepared for the Society in which they are growing up.

Well done to Year 8 who approached the whole day maturely and left with lots to think about.

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ROCK ANTICS RUMOUR

Whilst ROF 59 is doing very well indeed and investing further in new

outdoor activities including an army assault course, zip wire, outdoor laser combat, ninja warrior course and a play area for small children, rumours are that Rock Antics who rent part of the premises, might be closing. This will be a blow to all the people who use this unique facility at Aycliffe and Newton News asked if there was any truth in the rumour.

Rock Antics will neither confirm or deny their closure so it is a question of wait and see. ROF 59 have not received notice and insist the decision is nothing to do with them or their relationship with Rock Antics.

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Crafters New Store Manager

A multi-tasking mum with over a decade of retail experience has been selected by North East-based craft company, Crafter's Companion, to head up its flagship Newton Aycliffe store.

Amy Rodger, 28, from Chester-Le-Street joins the leading international craft company as store manager with a strong merchandising background, having climbed the retail ladder from Saturday girl to management whilst raising her son, Ellis. In charge of overseeing the day-to-day running of the store and staff training, Amy will also spearhead the store's popular monthly craft classes and demonstrations - as well as arranging and managing the smooth running of regular

coach trips and craft group visits to the Newton Aycliffe store.

Amy will also be tasked with building awareness of the Crafter's Companion brand and crafting among the local community and further afield.

"I'm so happy to be joining the team," Amy commented. "The opportunity to be part of an internationally successful and rapidly growing business, which still has its roots firmly placed in the North East, is very exciting."

Amy began her professional life in high street retail after completing her A-Levels. After becoming a mother she remained focussed on her career and went from strength to strength - she gained her level 1, 2 and



3 retail NVQs and began delivering customer service training to staff.

On making the shift to crafting retail Amy said: "Other than crafting with my son, the industry was new to me, but since I've joined the business I've loved learning about different crafts, the amazing products available and the beautiful things you can create yourself. I'm now making cards for family occasions and find it really relaxing me after a busy day juggling work and a very excitable 10-year-old!"

"Having recently discovered the joys of crafting myself, I'm particularly looking forward to my role in raising awareness of activities such as paper crafting, adult colouring, stamping and needlecraft to the region's novice crafters."

Crafter's Companion is a global craft supplies company which sells its products globally online, on TV shopping channels, via independent retailers and in its own UK retail stores in Newton Aycliffe and Chesterfield.

The Newton Aycliffe store holds regular workshops and charity events to support the local community. For a full programme of events visit <http://www.crafterscompanion.co.uk/aycliffe-store>.

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Police Notice

Following receipt of an anonymous letter to Chief Constable Mike Barton which was threatening in its content towards a number of Labour Durham County Councillors, the Durham Constabulary yesterday arrested a 39-year-old local man on suspicion of sending a malicious communication. The man has been interviewed and bailed from police custody whilst the police investigation continues.

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DONATIONS needed of Bric-a-Brac and other good condition items for Newton Aycliffe good causes. Ring Honest John 316630 after 5pm.

RSPCA North Tees & District cats and kittens for adoption, fee applies to cover 1st and 2nd vaccination, also neutering and ID chip. Please Tel 311215 of Trustees. All members and new members are welcome.

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(no jumble)

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on

Saturday 25th March 2017

from

10.00am to 12.30pm

£5.00 per table/space. To book please ring 01325 314735, leaving your name and contact details.

accountability and therefore, as this 2013/17 County Council draws to a close, it is appropriate to provide an account of the achievements and support provided by County Councillors Joan Gray, Mike Dixon and myself to our ward over the past four years.

To this end, we have put out leaflets identifying some of the highlights, but I have also provided a complete record online, both as a written list, and also as a map, so you can see where we have allocated neighbourhood spending. In addition, I have recently been recording vlogs (videos) showing our work around the ward.

I have now pulled all these together into a single blog-post, which can be accessed online at <http://bit.ly/ANAM1317> where residents of Aycliffe North & Middridge ward can see and comment on what we have done.

John D Clare

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PWS - Aycliffe Company of the Year

A fourth generation family firm which manufactures kitchen components was named Aycliffe Business Park's Company of the Year during an evening of celebration.

PWS picked up the top accolade at Aycliffe Business Park Community's Make Your Mark event, held at the Xcel Centre with more than 250 people in attendance.

The award was presented by John Finley, managing director of steel firm Finley Structures, which won the same recognition last year and sponsored it this time around.

PWS, which employs 300 people across its sites on Aycliffe Business Park, is a market leader in the design and supply of quality kitchen components and work surfaces to manufacturers, retailers and installers.

While product development and innovation continues to be the driving force behind the business, **PWS** also prides itself on being a good corporate citizen, engaging with the local community, which was demonstrated in their partnership with Help for Heroes when the company and its staff raised a record-breaking £314,000 for the charity in 2016.

PWS managing director John Lennon said: "We are delighted to be crowned overall Company of the Year. It's a great honour to be recognised for our manufacturing expertise, contribution to the local economy, and our commitment to investment, not forgetting the incredible efforts of our staff who helped to raise £314,000 for Phoenix House, the Help For Heroes Recovery Centre at Catterick Garrison."

Meanwhile, **Hitachi Rail** won the Apprenticeships award, which was sponsored by Gestamp Tallent. Hitachi has created hundreds of new jobs in Aycliffe, including more than 50 apprenticeships already.

Arlington Automotive was crowned winners of the Employer of the Year award, which was sponsored by NBSL. Having obtained the Investors in People accreditation, Arlington Automotive also works with Job Centre Plus to provide work experience opportunities for people with barriers to work and assist in developing skills that are transferable to other businesses.

Premo Fabrications won the Engineering & Manufacturing award, which was sponsored by Business Durham. Formed in 2009 with nine employees, Premo now has more than 50 staff and since year one have increased turnover by over 150%.

Stiller Warehousing & Distribution was handed the Innovation award, which was sponsored by Endeavour Partnership, after the family-run firm launched an innovative scheme to encourage people to take up a career in HGV driving with its own in-house 'earn while you learn' scheme.

Primex Plastics won the Export award, which was sponsored by the Department for International Trade. Primex currently exports to 10 EU countries and two others around the world, while its production has more than doubled in the last six years.

Fourth generation family business **Beaumont Grounds Maintenance** picked up the Small Business of the Year award, which was sponsored by the Xcel Centre. Beaumont's team has grown over the last year and the firm prides itself on family values that remain at the heart of the company.

Trident Manor, which provides risk management consultancy services to a wide range of local, regional, national and international clients, won the Service Business of the Year award, which was sponsored by South Durham Enterprise Agency. Trident has helped businesses save more than £100,000 in security costs, while its international activities have covered Kazakhstan, Cyprus, Russia, Croatia and the USA.

UTC South Durham picked up the Newcomer award, which was sponsored by Ebac. The UTC opened in September 2016 with an intake of 160 students from years 10 and 12 and is set to double

ROAD to Success for Unemployed Over 25's

The needs of many people aged 25+ in County Durham are still to be met, and by working closely with these individuals, Reaching Out Across Durham (ROAD) aims to provide a positive experience, with a full and personalised package of support in a way which overcomes barriers and challenges perceptions.

A partnership of 12 voluntary and community organisations and hosted by Groundwork NE & Cumbria, ROAD wants to make a real difference to the lives of 625 people who aren't currently in any form of employment and unable to access current provision. A Building Better Opportunities Programme, ROAD is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund until July 2019.

Participants will receive tailored, 1-to-1 support from our Partners and specialists, who via ROAD, will compliment and add value to existing services by working with the long-term unemployed and economically inactive who need support the most. We will engage with those

who have chaotic lifestyles, face deep-rooted obstacles, have continuing health issues and focus on the hardest to reach. Where applicable, we will refer Participants to the range of excellent programmes already delivered in County Durham, or if specific gaps are identified, provide bespoke delivery around the themes of health & wellbeing and financial and digital inclusion. With consideration to Durham's local labour markets, we will focus on employability advice and skills that are geographically relevant and timely, and provide supported volunteering linked to employment opportunities by working with employers and offering employment training to individuals with multiple barriers. We wish to celebrate the achievement of those who progress by promoting their stories, involving them in the design of activity and enabling them to be peer mentors to demonstrate real life experiences.

For more information, please email ROAD@groundwork.org.uk or call 01207 524 833.



John Finley, (left) managing director Finley Structures, with PWS Jeremy Redshaw, Jill Lundberg and Michael Catmull.

its current team.

Ben Thubron of **Baltic Training Services** won the Apprentice of the Year award, which was sponsored by Crafter's Companion. Ben joined Baltic in 2015 as an IT support apprentice, and having successfully completed level 3 qualification, has now been accepted onto his level 4 apprenticeship.

Finally, charity **DISC** won the Heart of the Community award, which was sponsored by Star Radio. DISC is one of the North-East's most successful home grown organisations, having spent more than 30 years committed to reducing deprivation and exclusion, and improving people's wellbeing.

The third annual Make Your Mark awards event was the first to be organised by the new Aycliffe Business Park Community board of directors, and was the first to sell out.

Chair Kerina Clark said: "We're absolutely delighted with this year's event – it was another spectacular evening of celebration, which not just singled out the individual winners, but also the dozens of companies which were shortlisted.

"All of the businesses involved this year deserve huge praise for the achievements they've made, and all we would say is if you didn't win, try again next year!"

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Great Aycliffe Community Aid Partnership

Bags of Money for Community Groups

A good number of partners attended the monthly meeting of Great Aycliffe Community Aid Partnership (GACAP) on Monday 6th March at DISC Offices near the Blue Bridge. The meeting was chaired by Ron Mitchie, Assistant Secretary, who welcomed all present. Dorothy Bowman and Joan Mitchie gave a presentation and overview of what it means to be a Dementia Friend.

In 2012 David Cameron challenged the Alzheimer's Society to enrol a million people to be a dementia friend as we are living longer. The government's plan is to keep people at home longer, as we are now living in a society where some people, either living on their own or with their partners have dementia. Dorothy and Joan gave a passionate presentation to partners and Joan explained there were things that people living with dementia must contend with in every day life.

They asked partners to invite them to their organisation/charity/business to give further presentations.

Helen Maynard and Joe Riley from TESCO Newton Aycliffe who have been active partners of GACAP for some time, presented the opportunity for significant funding from TESCO following the 5p levy paid by customers purchasing carrier bags.

"Bags of Help" is their local community grant scheme where the money raised from the carrier bags is being used to fund thousands of local projects in communities across the UK. This was initially for green project but that isn't the case now and any organisation who helps the local community can apply. Geographical changes now include Newton Aycliffe with Bishop Auckland instead of Teesdale.

There will be three prizes every month £4K, £2K, and £1K which is a significant amount over a year of £84K. Joe said it would be good to see some of the money going back into the Newton Aycliffe area.

Groundworks are the environmental charity who work across the UK helping communities find practical solutions to challenges they face. To apply for a funding pack, which is quite easy, contact Leah Codner on 01642 2815663 or email her on leah.codner@groundworks.org.uk. Liane Taylor treasurer of Gacap updated partners on the amount of money available for small funding projects. She reminded partners of the opportunity to get small grants for projects that are hard to fund. Copies of the grant application was available to partners, she would forward a copy to all who asked.

The next meeting of GACAP is on 3rd April at DISC offices next door to Newton News. The AGM is on 24th April. All officer's stand down annually and must be nominated and seconded for re-election.

Ron advised partners that both the Chairman and Vice Chairman have indicated they are standing down, therefore there would be some changes to officers at the AGM and partners were encouraged to consider being nominated for office.

'Pie'd' and Tested 'Recipies' Vote Winner



Bakers and fans of British culinary classics said 'bon a-pie-tite' to British pie week 2017 as Rose Lodge care home, Newton Aycliffe, celebrated with their own pie cook off competition.

Their cook off competition saw staff members, residents and their family members at the home, which provides residential and specialist dementia care, submitting their best homemade pies and recipes which were then anonymously taste tested and judged.

Residents, staff and guests at Rose Lodge tucked into the homemade pies before scoring them for their presentation and taste.

The winning 'Star Baker' was Michelle Young, Administrator at Rose Lodge, with a delicious ham, spring onion, cheese and egg pie and was presented with an engraved chopping board trophy.

Second place went to Rose Lodge Maintenance Person Chris Watson with his 'breakfast pie' and third place went jointly to Jean McCreedy and Viv Rudge with a corned beef and sweet potato and a cheese, potato and leek with parmesan glaze pie respectively. The runners up all received a bottle of wine from the home.

The event was just one in a series of pie cook off competitions happening in Maria Mallaband and Countrywide Care Homes across the whole of the North East and North Yorkshire regions. Winners and other notable entries from each home will have their winning recipe published in a recipe book, delivered to the Care Group's homes across the region.

British Pie Week is held in the first week of March each year, this year from the 6th to the 12th March, and is a week long opportunity for Brits to celebrate the nation's comfort food favourite. Up and down the Country, people will be baking their favourite recipes at home or venturing out to local pubs, restaurants, and pie shops.

Nicola Wheatley, Manager of Rose Lodge care home, said: "We place a lot of importance on providing our residents with the food they love. Many grew up enjoying home-cooked pie dishes so we thought that a great way to celebrate British pie week was to try a selection of traditional and newer recipes. Our cook off competition

a great opportunity for our staff and our residents and their families to get together and bond over sharing food, swapping family recipes and enjoying a good time together."

Birthday Remembrance

Walter Kilburn

16th March 1935



Today would have been your 82nd birthday Dad and the first one we are celebrating without you. You are in our thoughts always Dad. No one will ever know how much we love and miss you. R.I.P. Dad. Tracy and Dave xx

Please give our Grandad the biggest hug and tell him how much we love and miss him. Tyler and Millie xx

Paul Clark

17th March 1957
to 8th July 2009

On your 60th birthday wishing with all our hearts that you were here to celebrate with us today. Happy birthday, we miss you so much. Love always, Carole, Adam & Diane, Matthew & Sarah and your gorgeous first Granddaughter Emilia Elizabeth xxxxx

GEORGE RICHARDS 16th March 1930. Another birthday without you. Miss you today but I miss you every day. Your loving Wife Lily.

GEORGE RICHARDS Dad. Second birthday without you. Love and miss you every day. Elizabeth and Keith.

GEORGE RICHARDS Grandad / Great Grandad. We all love and miss you. Happy birthday. **FRANK SWINBURNE** 18th March. Thinking of you today, your birthday, and every day. Love and miss you. From all your family xxx

Vote Winner



Durham Cathedral has been named UK Heritage Site of the Year in the BBC Countryfile Magazine Awards 2017. There was a landslide of votes for Durham's magnificent Cathedral.

Thank You

BRENDA HUTCHISON I would like to thank my Husband and family for the lovely flowers and presents for my 70th birthday. Also all my friends at Hub of Wishes for flowers, lovely presents and fab party and night out at the dogs xxx

TO A SPECIAL Daughter, Paula. Thank you for the surprise 50th Anniversary party you organised at the Bay Horse, Middridge and the special cake you had made for us. Enjoyed by all family and friends. Lots of love, Steve and Anne Sangster

Obituary

GREENALL (nee Smith). Elizabeth (Betty) of Gilpin Road, passed away on Tuesday 7th March, aged 92 years. A much loved Wife of the late John (Jack); devoted and much loved Mam of Kevin and Pauline and much loved Mother-in-Law to Colin and Margaret; loving Gran to Mark, Ian, Jayne, Andrew and Rachel, and a very proud Great-Gran to Lucy, Jack, Jessica, Jasmine, Lydia and Henry. Her Funeral will take place on Tuesday 21st March at 12 noon in Neville Parade Methodist Church followed by Committal and Cremation at Wear Valley Crematorium. Floral tributes and enquiries to Bryan Shepherd, Whitehouse Funeral Service, Surtees House, Hilton Road, Newton Aycliffe DL5 6EN. Tel: 01325 318600.

JIM THOMPSON. Jim of Newton Aycliffe passed away in hospital on 7th March, aged 74 years. Dearly beloved Husband of Ann; a much loved Dad to Kevin, Leanne and Martin; Treasured Grandad to Noah, Heidi, Joseph and Isaac; also a much loved Brother and Uncle. Family and friends please meet for Service at Wear Valley Crematorium on Friday 24th March for 10.00 am. Family flowers only, donations in lieu, if so desired, for Help For Heroes.

DEBBIE DAVIES. Suddenly in hospital on 6th March. Debbie (nee Clelland), aged 46 years. Much loved Mam of James, Beth-Anne and the late Laura; loving Daughter of Marina and the late Jim; much loved Sister of Jayne and the late Robert; loving Auntie to Sarah and Grandma to Amelia; also a loving and much loved partner to David Thompson. Will family and friends please meet for a Service in St. Clare's Church, Newton Aycliffe on Thursday 23rd March at 10.45 am. To be followed by a private family interment. At Debbie's request could everyone please dress in "Black and Bright".

BETTY SWAILES. Newton Aycliffe. Suddenly at home, on 12th March, Betty, aged 67 years. Dearly loved Wife of the late Ian; much loved Mum to David and Jackie and a beloved Nana to Fraser, Sydney, Islay and Harris. Funeral on Friday 24th March. Would friends kindly meet for Service in Wear Valley Crematorium, Coundon at 11.00am. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu, in aid of The Dogs Trust, Sadberge may be given at the Crematorium or will be accepted by Whitehouse Funeral Service, Surtees House, Hilton Road, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6EN. Tel: 01325 318600.

In Memoriam

Carol Reed

13th March 2015

Missed in the morning of every day. Missed in the evening as light fades away. Missed in a thousand and one different ways. Around every corner a memory stays. No one knows the pain we bear when we all meet and you're not there. We talk we laugh we play our part but behind it all lie broken hearts. You gave us years of happiness. Then sorrow comes with tears. You left us lovely memories. We will treasure through the years. Love always, Roy, Steven, Lara and families xx

Frank Reed



17th March 1997

It's time to remember a man we all knew. A man that was taken too soon. But it seems God had a plan, when he called Frank that Man, to travel to heaven's shore.

It was that St. Patrick's Day that Dad was taken to play and look after the kids of Dunblane who were taken a few days before he made the choice to take our Dad.

Whose love could depend, for now and ever more. Let's all rejoice and give thanks for the time with him we all spent. A man we will never forget. That day to Heaven was sent.

Now together with Mam.

Missed every day of our lives. Your family far and wide

Tina Allan

21st March

Daughter dear, you are gone from me. A hole in my heart there will always be. An ache I carry every night and day, longing for you always, along life's way. So much of life you never had, it seems so cruel and very sad. A wedding gown for you, not to be, no children to love or sit on your knee. We watched you grow so happy and tall, such happiness and joy you gave to us all. May the winds of love gently blow. Hug you and kiss you and let you know, we carry you with us wherever we go. All my love, Mum xxxxx

Tina Allan

21st March

"Remember Me"

Don't remember me with sadness, don't remember me with tears, remember all the laughter, we've shared throughout the years. Now I am contented, that my life was worthwhile, knowing that as I passed along the way I made somebody smile. When you're walking down the street and you've got me on your mind, I'm walking in your footsteps only half a step behind. So please don't be unhappy, just because I'm out of sight. Remember that I am with you, each morning, noon and night. All my love, Jacquie xx

Congratulations

Marcus Woodfine



21 amazing years with our favourite person. Happy Birthday darling, lots of love, Mum, Grandma and Mutley xxx

Happy 21st Birthday Love Auntie Karon, Neil and Luke xx

Happy 21st Birthday Love from Laura, Andrew and Sophie xx

JACK BURKITT Happy first birthday Jack to a wonderful Grandson. Lots of love and kisses from Nana and Grandad Burkitt xxx

MUSGROVE Congratulations Trish and Brian on your Golden Wedding Anniversary. Love from Ann & John, Trish & Dave, Lesley & Andrew

Juniors Football Report

The Aycliffe Juniors league schedules continued and there was another semi final to enjoy this week with manager Adrian Dawson looking for a double. After he guided the Under 17's to a final last week it was his Under 11's team facing Whinney Banks in the Under 11 TJFA League Cup semi this week.

Whinney Banks and Aycliffe have both been competing at the top of Division 1 this year so it was bound to be a tough and well contested match. The Aycliffe team though were out fought in a 5-0 loss. It was a day when the Aycliffe chances were not finished and the strong visitors took their opportunities and deservedly won the game to progress to the final.

The Under 7's continued their Russell Foster League Spring Cup playing Hetton Lyons. They were involved in another high scoring draw and were left disappointed to end the game 3-3 when they were 3-0 ahead. Man of the match Thomas scored twice and Jamie got the other goal as the Aycliffe team started really well. The chances kept coming but unfortunately goals were conceded at the other end and the game ended in a draw.

The Under 8 and Under 9's squads enjoyed a training session with Newton Aycliffe



FC senior team on Thursday so they were all well prepared for the weekends games. The hard work in training paid off with each team coming up with a win.

The Under 8's went on to complete their league season with a 4-2 win against Darlington RA. They are likely to finish the league in third place so well done to all the players for a great league campaign.

The Under 9 Russell Foster league team started their Spring Cup season with a 3-0 win against Birtley Town. Man of the match Jake Smith completed a hatrick in this great team performance as they dominated the game from beginning to end.

The Under 9 TJFA league team were at home to Bishop Auckland St Mary's and they

secured an impressive 10-0 win. Jack got a hatrick, Harvey and Jayden scored a brace each, with Will, Dom and Connor getting a goal a piece. Harvey was named as the man of the match in this game with Will taking that accolade in the second game, which was also a convincing win.

The Under 10's travelled to play Billingham United Wasps but lost out 4-1. The Under 11 Russell Foster league team played their League Shield first round game against Shotton which had been cancelled the week before. They put in a great performance against a team from the league above to progress to the next round with a 9-1 win. Every player was named as man of the match in a great team display. The goals came from Charlie (4) and one each for Jake, Taylor, Anthony and Noah with an own goal also going in Aycliffe's favour. The Under 12's made the short trip to Heighington and man of the match Charlie Cayless scored in a 4-0 win.

The Under 17's were back in league action at home against Billingham Juniors. Arran scored from a corner and Kieran from the penalty spot as Aycliffe gained a 2-0 lead. Both Lewis Race and Lewis Bunting then scored and the half time score was 4-2. The visitors made it 4-4 before both Lewis' and Sam scored in an exciting 8-5 win.

AYCLIFFE F.C. 9th IN LEAGUE

Newton Aycliffe FC were good value for this 3-0 win away to West Auckland, and had several good chances to come away with a much bigger win. They got off to a flier after 2 minutes when a Ben Wood shot was blocked but it fell to captain Jamie Owens, who finished with a low shot into the corner.

The game then settled down as the midfields dominated the play, as the pitch started to cut up. On 20 minutes, Mattie Lovegreen who had come into the side at right back, struck a great shot just over the bar. A minute later, Stuart Banks got free in the penalty box, and got his shot away to the near post, only for home keeper Lewis to pull off a good save.

The remainder of the half produced few chances, as the teams worked hard to cope with the muddy conditions. Half-time 0-1.

Aycliffe dominated the second half from start to finish. Banks was acting as

a great outlet for Aycliffe, producing mazy runs on a poor surface and getting his pass away. Owens had a good chance after 53 minutes when his shot rolled just past the right-hand post.

Two minutes later Ben Wood repeated the feat. Aycliffe then brought on Josh Gray for Charlie Raby, after which Banks and Gray both tormented the West defence. Aycliffe were in complete control and had further chances to stretch their lead, but again Owens and then Banks put efforts just past the post!

The pressure told just past the hour when Scott Howes overlapped down the left, and hit a powerful low shot. Lewis got down well to save, but only pushed it out to Owens who put it away for his second for 0-2. Ben Wood then had a curler tipped over the bar. With 20 minutes left, a shot by Aycliffe's Gray was deflected and yet again it rolled just past the right-hand post.

The pressure continued and on 73 minutes Gray got his reward when he dribbled through and got a shot away; it was deflected and at last, this one rolled in just inside the right-hand post! West, to their credit kept going and on 90 minutes, Phil Pentony made a good save from ex-Aycliffe player Zak Boagey. The win takes Aycliffe to 51 points this season, they currently sit ninth in the league. They returned to Moore Lane on Tuesday 14th March to play Seaham Red Star. They then travel to Sunderland RCA on Saturday 18th.



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The Best Weekend of Hannah's Life



The Aycliffe swimming club had been aware that Hannah Featherstone was selected for the North Eastern Region to compete in the E.S.S.A. Championships.

The freestyle events had been the main focus of her training leading up to this event, but what came as a wonderful surprise was when she was chosen as Girls Team Captain. A capacity crowd helped create a tremendous atmosphere producing some nail biting races and superb times with the North Eastern Team in third place overall.

The role of captain in any sport is to lead by example and this Hannah did in no uncertain manner competing in the FS Team, winning silver and bronze in the Medley Team. In her individual events Hannah won the gold medal in both the 200 and 100 Freestyle and the silver medal in the 200 Backstroke.

Throughout the gala swimmers are awarded FINA points that relate to the times achieved. This year for the first time a trophy was awarded to the swimmer with the highest number of points.

Hannah's total of 755 was the highest score of all competitors and she received the trophy with her name the first to be engraved. Congratulations Hannah from everyone in the club on a superb performance which she said was the best weekend of her life.



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